

REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

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GEARING UP: R-2 PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness held its first **Citizen Corps Conference** this week (below), bringing together Citizen Corps Program Managers from New York State, New York City, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico to discuss preparedness outreach and education, best volunteer management practices and innovative ways to secure funding.

Citizen Corps Councils bring together community leaders from local government, emergency management and emergency service providers — including hospitals, schools, volunteer and service organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, and advocacy groups. Having all stakeholders at the table — or, in this case, the 6th floor Conference Room at 26 Federal Plaza — promotes a unified community effort to improve the health and safety of residents, and to prepare for and respond to disasters.

The conference focused on two key issues; H1N1 and the relationship between Citizen Corps and VOAD in Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services. Representatives from New Jersey, New York City, and Long Island Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) attended the conference, discussing ways in which their Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services initiatives can be more closely coordinated, enhanced and even extended by collaborating with the Citizen Corp Councils. Attendees were also presented with four different H1N1 disaster scenarios, which prompted a brainstorming session on Citizen Corps' response.



BE OUR GUEST: GREGORY MEEKS, Democratic congressman

Hurricane evacuation plan's key for wide swaths of boro

New Yorkers typically think of the Gulf Coast states and the Carolinas as hurricane zones, not the southern parts of Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Yet wide swaths, particularly of south-east Queens and the Rockaway Peninsula, which have zero sea level elevation and are bordered by Jamaica Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, would be ground zero if a hurricane even glanced at New York City and its environs. These areas often experience flooding, backed up sewers, fallen trees and power outages after a major rainstorm. We've been fortunate to escape the direct blow of hurricanes, but I worry greatly about whether our luck will run out.

One of the chief lessons to be drawn from Hurricane Katrina is the importance of emergency preparedness. This not only involves advanced planning and coordination between federal, state and city emergency responders, but also family preparedness.

At the conference, I called last month, I learned that the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Homeland Security Department, and the New York City Office of Emergency Management

Management Office, among others, have come a long way in emergency preparedness. With only three rough hours of preparation, Far Rockaway — two miles from the city — could be flooded — a disaster that would impact thousands of residents.

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Moriarty, FEMA's acting regional administrator, told me several weeks ago, that in addition to having a family plan, we need a neighborhood plan — knowing where the elderly or disabled residents in your community live. Local preparedness focuses on having plans, getting individually trained in a life-saving skill — such as CPR — and keeping your neighbors in mind.

It's a key, cooperative theme played by the New York City Office of Emergency Management, the New York State Office of Emergency Management, and the local effort and Rockaway Peninsula.

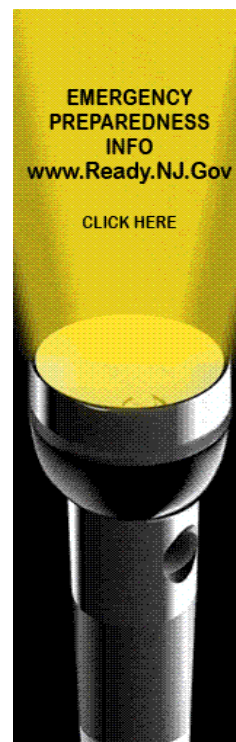
I will continue to work with my colleagues in the federal, state and city levels as well as voluntary organizations on keeping southeast Queens residents safe and ready in the event of a natural disaster.

Congressman Gregory Meeks, a Democrat, represents the sixth congressional district, which includes most of southeastern Queens.

External Affairs' participation in a Town Hall on Preparedness hosted by Rep. Gregory Meeks (NY-6) in mid-July netted an Op-Ed piece in *The Daily News* last week, in which ARA Moriarty was quoted (above). Only 40 Congressional districts to go!

NJ Office of Emergency Management, the NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and the Regional Operations and Intelligence Center have launched **NJ Alert**, an opt-in mass text and email emergency notification system. It's User Group feature will also allow businesses to keep in touch with employees and customers in the event of an emergency.

911 COMES TO USVI
VITEMA introduced 911 on St. Croix last week, streamlining the island's emergency response operations for both first responders and residents.



NEW NORMAL GOAL OF LTR WORKSHOP

Last week, Long Term Recovery was the subject of a national workshop in Atlanta, attended by HQ personnel and IA representatives from all 10 regions. Attending for Region II were Mike Beeman, Julia Roberts, Jose I. Rodriguez, Jorge Lopez, Craig Ket-zak, Iris Epsenhart and Marshall Mabry.

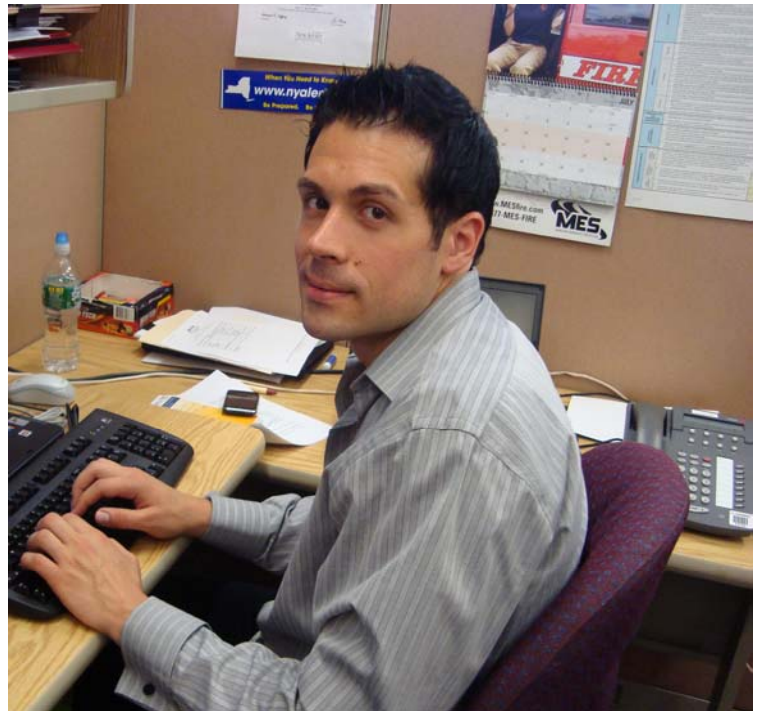
National Coordinator Matt Campbell opened the session with a discussion of the purpose and goal of ESF-14 – its core concepts, timelines and tools. Campbell cited the Code of Federal Regulations, the National Response Plan, the National Response Framework and Director Fugate's recent speeches and Congressional testimony, all of which emphasized **returning disaster-impacted communities to their "new" normal as soon as possible**. While this end-point may not be a definite state in the recovery process, there are "markers" that suggest when that stage has been reached, Campbell said.

ESF-14 experiences in such diverse disaster as Windsor, Colorado; Cedar Falls, Iowa; Rock Springs, Wisconsin; Bolivar and Galveston, Texas were analyzed.

The tools used during the various recovery phases of each of these disasters' were detailed, with their applications illustrated, and timelines discussed. Partner identification, and especially the resources they can bring to the table, was of particular focus, as was the vital importance of an overall Federal Recovery Plan to align recovery operations.



FACES OF REGION II



DAVID FORTINO

Dave works in Preparedness as the Region's Citizen Corps Program Manager. He works with state, local and non-governmental groups, as well as with other federal agencies, to promote and strengthen community preparedness with technical assistance on coalition building, collaborative planning and program development. By sharing "best practices" with community activists, Dave is helping to create a cohesive supplement to first responders, one trained troop at a time.

His first FEMA deployment followed Hurricane Faye in Florida last October, working Public Assistance along the Orlando-Miami corridor. But his emergency management experience has older, more local roots: he was the Director of the Madison Ambulance Association, Inc., in Madison, CT., where he managed 30 employees and a \$1 million dollar annual budget. He also secured federal grants to sustain and expand the program and served as the Association's primary liaison to state and local government officials.

Prior to that, Dave was the Emergency Services Coordinator for the American Red Cross in Nassau County, NY, where he trained over 100 volunteers in disaster response. He also assisted in the development of Nassau County's Continuity of Operations plan, and a county wide strategic Disaster Response Plan.

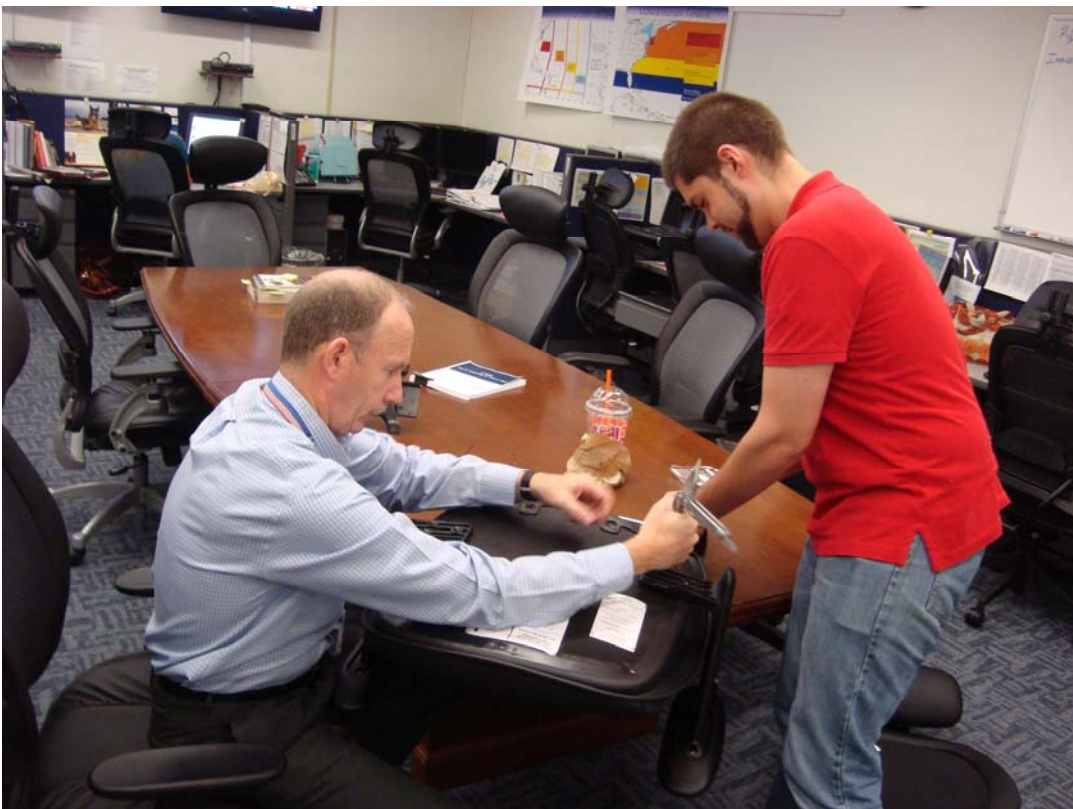
David was an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for 11 years. He has completed a number of emergency management classes, including 11 FEMA independent study courses, and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban and Community Studies from the University of Connecticut.

PET PREPS

Mark Tinsman, Program Specialist, Mass Care, with FEMA HQ (second from right) meets with Region II IA staff to discuss the laws, regulations, and policy governing pet evacuations. One month into hurricane season, the group is busy as beavers, which are not covered by the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006.



FEMA FLEXIBLE



With the hurricane season upon us, Emergency Response Specialist Alan Neidermeyer (left) and Watch Officer Brice Acosta work to assemble one of the 10 new chairs ordered for the RRCC. The 10 new seats are designed for comfort — even if they may prove hot once the RRCC is activated. OPS' Newton Tang (not shown here) was also pressed into service.

